Question

**Features of Makki and Madni Surahs**

**Surahs** revealed before Hijrah are termed **Makki** and those after Hijrah are termed**Madni**. They do not mean that the ayat were explicitly revealed in Makkah or Madinah. ... There are 86 **Makki surahs** and 28 **Madani Surahs.**

Both “Makki” and “Madani” surahs have certain characteristics or features that are unique to each of them, and these help us to distinguish between them. Some of these features are:

1. All surahs (chapters), or verses containing the word ( **كَلَّا** ) “kalla” are “Makki” in origin.  Examples of the word ( **كَلَّا** ) are in surah al-Takathur (102: 3-5 ):

**{ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ }            [Nay! You shall come to know!]**

**{ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ }         [ Again nay! You shall come to know!]**

**{ كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ  } [Nay! If you knew with a sure knowledge]**

The word ( **كَلَّا** ) appears 33 times in 15 surahs, and these are only in the last 15 “ajza’a” (parts) of the Quran.

2. All surahs containing the prostration of recitation (“sajdah al-tilawah”) are “Makki” surahs. There are 14 verses (and according to some opinions, 15) with prostrations of recitation in the Quran.

3. All surahs with a reference to the hypocrites or “munafiqun” (**مُنَافِقُونَ** ) are “Madani” surahs.

4.  “Makki” surahs (or verses) often have the phrase of addressing, { **يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاس** } which means [O’ mankind], whereas “Madani” ones have the phrase, {**يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا** } which means [O’ you who believe].  
The Qur’aan was’revealed in sections to Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلمfrom the beginning of his Prophet-hood until shortly before his death. Thus, the Qur’aan came down continuously over a period of twenty-three years.

Many sections of the Qur’aan were generally revealed to solve the problems which existed among the Muslim communities in both *Makkah* and *Madeenah*. Since the problems and needs of *Makkah* were different from those of*Madeenah*, the revelations of *Makkah* and *Madeenah* have special characteristic of their own.

It is important to know the difference between the revelations of *Makkah*and *Madeenah* if the Qur’aan itself is to be clearly understood. Because of the great importance of the Qur’aan to *Islaam*, Muslims scholars from the time of the *Sahaabah* have devoted much time and effort in this area of study.

**Question 2: Features of Makki and madni Surahs**

**THE FEATURES OF MAKKAN REVELATIONS:**

*Makkan* revelations are defined as all verses and chapters of the Qur’aan which were brought by *Jibreel* عليه السلام to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم before the *Hijrah* (i.e. before the Prophet’s migration to *Madeenah*). These include verses which were revealed in *Taa’if* as well as those revealed in other areas outside of *Makkah*. These revelations represent the first stage of *Islaamic*movement in which its fundamentals were established.

**1.**     **TAWHEED**:

When *Islaam* was first presented to the people of *Makkah*, they were in a state of disbelief. They made idols to represent these intermediaries and worshipped them instead of Allaah. Thus, the early revelations taught the people about Allaah’s unity (*Tawheed*) and power over all things. They told the people that Allaah was without parents, offspring or any partner who shared His powers.

**2.**     **SALAAH:**

After the first verses of revelation came informing the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلمthat he had been chosen for prophet-hood, Allaah sent *Jibreel* عليه السلام to teach him the correct method of prayer. This was necessary because the correct method of prayer could not be arrived at by logical reasoning. Therefore, even the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself had to be taught the correct method of worshipping Allaah. Thus, the early verses called upon the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his early band of followers to make their Salaah regularly.

**3.**     **THE UNSEEN:**

Since there was no way that human beings could possibly come to know about the unseen world, the early verses taught them about its wonders, its mysteries, and its horrors. The verses described Paradise and its pleasures in order to encourage the believers to continue to do good deeds and to assure them of a reward. They also described the Hell-fire and its torments in order to encourage the believers to strive to avoid evil deeds.

**4.**     **ALLAAH’S EXISTENCE:**

There were some individuals among the *Makkans* who were in the doubt about Allaah’s very existence. Thus, some of the early verses presented logical arguments proving Allaah’s existence. Sometimes proofs were taken from nature and the creatures’ common to the society. Allaah asked the*Makkans*:

The answer had to be one or the other. Since they knew they had not created themselves, they had to realize that they were created. Even if they said that they came from their parents and their parents came from their parents and so on. The numbers eventually decreases to one who came from nothing. Thus, Allaah, the Creator, has to be accepted for our own existence to make sense.

**5.**     **CHALLENGES:**

In order to prove to the *Quraysh* that the Qur’aan was from Allaah and that Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم was a Prophet of Allaah, some of the *Makkan* verses challenged the Arabs to imitate the Qur’aan. Many of the chapters began with individual letters like “*Alim Laam Meem*”, “*Saad*”, or “*Noon*” in order to tease the *Makkans* with the same letters of the alphabet that they made their flowery speeches and poetry with. Allaah revealed the Qur’aan with the same letters, but they could not just imitate it. Since the Arabs were unable to produce even a chapter resembling the smallest chapter of the Qur’aan, the miraculous nature of the Qur’aan and its divine origin were clearly proven to the people at that time. However, many of them preferred to look at the Qur’aan as a magical spell, and the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم as a master magician.

**6.**     **THE PEOPLE OF OLD:**

The *Makkan* verses often mentioned historical examples of earlier civilizations, like the `*Aad* and the *Thamood*. They were mentioned in order to warn those who had rejected the message of *Islaam*. The verses spoke about the wonders of the ancient civilizations. They listed the many blessings which Allaah had bestowed on the peoples of those civilizations. Then they (the verses) recounted how the people disobeyed Allaah and denied His blessings, and how Allaah’s punishment caught them when they were totally unaware of what could become of them if Allaah so willed.

**7.**     **EEMAAN:**

Very few laws were revealed in the *Makkan* verses. Instead, the verses concentrated on the principles which would build the *Eemaan* of the early Muslims. These verses spoke of the importance of fearing Allaah and being aware of His presence and knowledge of all things. They were often filled with advice about being patient, perseverant, truthful and trustworthy, in order to build the moral spiritual character of the early Muslims who were in a minority and under a lot of pressure from *Makkan* society.

**8.**     **SHORT VERSES:**

The *Makkan* *Surahs* usually had short verses, catchy rhymes, and a very strong rhythm. These qualities were meant to catch the attention of listeners who were basically opposed to the message of *Islaam*. The verses had to be short because the audience would not be willing to listen to long, drawn-out statements. As soon as they heard any of the Qur’aan, they would stick their fingers in their ears and turn away. Thus, the verses often had to strike home immediately.

**THE FEATURES OF MADEENAN REVELATIONS**

*Madeenan* revelations are all those verses and chapters of the Qur’aan which were revealed after the *Hijrah*. This includes verses which were revealed during the battles, as well as those revealed in *Makkah* and *Minaa* during and after the Farewell Pilgrimage. All of these verses are considered *Madeenan*because they represent the revelations of the second stage of the *Islaamic*movement in which the consolidation of the *Islaamic* state took place.

The following are some of the main characteristics of *Madeenan* verses:

**1.**     **LAWS:**

Once *Madeenah* had become the new center of the *Islaamic* movement, the*Islaamic* state was born. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم became the ruler over the Muslims of *Madeenah*, as well as the Jews and the Arab idol-worshipers who lived there. A constitution was drawn up and a system of justice was established. Thus, the verses during the *Madeenan* stage contained many social, economical and spiritual laws which were necessary for the organization and the development of an *Islaamic* state. *Zakaah*, *Sawm*, and Hajj were revealed. Likewise, it was during this period that drinking alcohol, eating swine, and gambling were all forbidden.

**2.**     **PEOPLE OF THE BOOK:**

In *Madeenah*, Muslims came in contact with the Jews for the first time. In order to try to shake the beliefs of the Muslims, the Jews used to ask the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم various questions about Allaah, the earlier Prophets, and the unseen. They asked questions about the origin of the soul and what it was made of. Thus, a number of *Madeenan* verses represented answers to the many questions raised by the Jews. The Muslims of *Madeenah* also came in contact with the Christians on a larger scale. As a result of that, we find a number of *Madeenan* verses clarifying Christian misconceptions about Prophet `*Eesa* عليه السلام (Jesus) and Allaah. They pointed out that `*Eesa’s* عليه السلام birth was not greater than that of *Aadam* عليه السلام who had neither father nor mother.

They also stressed that the miracles of `*Eesa*, such as bringing the dead back to life, were only by Allaah’s permission. Thus, `*Eesa* was not a god nor the son of Allaah, and Allaah was not the third of the three.

**3.**     **THE MUNAFIQOON:**

For the first time since the beginning of the final message we find people entering *Islaam*, yet not believing in it. In *Makkah*, Muslims were oppressed and attacked, so no one would enter *Islaam* unless he truly believed. On the other hand, the Muslims of *Madeenah* were strong and they ruled the city. Thus, we find some people entering *Islaam* in order to benefit from its strength and to oppose it from within. `*Abdullaah* *ibn* *Ubayy* ibn *Salool* was about to be crowned King of *Madeenah* when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلمarrived. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was made the ruler of *Madeenah* and *IbnSalool’s* hopes were ruined. Since the Muslims were strong and he could not openly oppose them, he accepted *Islaam* and worked against it from within. He eventually became the head of the *Munaafiqoon* (hypocrites). Thus, the verses of the *Madeenan* stage warned the Muslims about the dangers of the hypocrites and taught them how to deal effectively with them.

**4.**     **JIHAAD:**

The right to fight against the enemy was given for the first time in al-*Madeenah*. During the *Makkan* period, Muslims were forbidden to fight back. This was for two basic reasons: (1) The Muslims were a minority and could easily be wiped out, and (2) only the strong could survive the test. The*Makkan* period prepared the foundation of the *Islaamic* movement to come. It was during the *Madeenan* stage that a series of battles were fought against the forces of disbelief until finally *Makkah* was conquered and the whole of the Arabian Peninsula came under the rule of *Islaam*. Thus, a number of the*Madeenan* verses taught Muslims the *Islaamic* principles of war. For example, they taught how to deal with prisoners of war and they forbade retreat during an attack except as a trick to trap the enemy. They also encouraged the Muslims to prepare themselves with the best weapons and battle gear they could find.

**5.**     **LONG VERSES**:

The *Madeenan* verses tended to be longer than those of *Makkah*. In fact, there are a number of *Madeenan* verses which are longer than the whole*Surahs* of the *Makkan* period. The longest verse of the Qur’aan is the verse on loans in the *Madeenan* *Surah*, al-*Baqarah* (2): 282. This verse contains approximately 143 words. The shortest *Surah* of the Qur’aan is the *MakkanSurah* al-*Kawthar*, which contains a total of only 11 separate words in its three short verses. The need to catch the attention of unwilling listeners was no longer there because *Islaam* had become strong and its followers were many. Thus, the audience at this stage was quite willing to listen attentively to longer verses teaching the vital laws of *Islaam*.

**6.**     **ORDER OF THE SURAHS:**

Although all the *Makkan* verses were revealed during the same period, they were neither memorized nor written in the same order of which they were revealed. Verses from various *Surahs* were revealed at once. Whenever single verses were revealed, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would tell his scribes to write it in the *Surah* to which it belonged. If a new *Surah* was revealed, he would recite the *Surah* in the order it was to be recorded. Once the*Madeenan* verses and *Surahs* began to be revealed, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلمwould tell his companions to place them before or after certain *MakkanSurahs* and verses. Thus, when the revelation of the Qur’aan was complete,*Makkan* verses could be found within the *Madeenan* *Surahs* and *Madeenan*verses within the *Makkan* *Surahs*. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم recorded the verses and the *Surahs* of the Qur’aan according to Allaah’s command. The reason for that was that the verses were revealed according to the needs of a developing community, whereas the order for reading purposes needed to be varied so as not to make the Qur’aan seem one-sided in its presentation. The mixture of verses and chapters from the two stages gives the reader a more balanced picture of the message of *Islaam*. (And Allaah knows best)